

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
(PUBLIC PARTICIPATION)**

July 16, 2002

7:00 PM

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

Mayor Baines called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman Osborne.

Mayor Baines stated as most of you know, Adam Curtis, the son of one of this building's most dedicated and trusted employees, Jackie Curtis, was killed in a motor bike accident in Derry. Adam was only 12 years old. He was a student at the Middle School at Parkside. Jackie and her husband were very proud of her son and it has become apparent as we read about what kind of kid he was that she had every reason to be proud. In her most recent trip to my office she described the successful transition from the cocoon of West Side Catholic, a small school by Manchester standards, to the Middle School at Parkside, a considerably larger and more complex place. She reported that he had settled in quite well and was looking forward to being a seventh grader. I would ask you to keep the Curtis family in your prayers this evening, not just in the next few days and this evening but also throughout the next weeks and coming months as we help them deal with death's rituals – a wake and a funeral but in the days following as they continue to grapple with the most profound loss imaginable to any of us. Will you please join with me in a moment of silent prayer in memory of Adam Curtis? A collection is being taken up by City employees for a donation to the Boys and Girls Club in Adam's name and any Aldermen or other who wish to contribute should see Alderman Lopez.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Wihby, Gatsas, Guinta, Sysyn, Osborne, Pinard, O'Neil, Lopez, Shea, DeVries, Garrity, Smith, Thibault, and Forest.

Mayor Baines advised that the purpose of the special meeting is to give residents of Manchester the opportunity to address the Board on items of concern affecting the community; that each person will be given only one opportunity to speak; that comments shall be limited to two minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair.

Mayor Baines requested that any resident wishing to speak come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized, and give their comments.

Bob Raiche, Manchester stated:

I would like to present the City of Manchester this composite of photographs that I took right after 9/11. These were taken in October and November of last year and they are flags that were flying proudly in the City of Manchester. I titled it “Flags of Manchester-Reflecting” and this I am presenting to the City of Manchester.

Estelle Tardiff, 180 Woodbury Street, Manchester stated:

I am here for the seniors and as you can see there are quite a few of us. We hope tonight that you will be listening to us and as the old saying goes, “Mother Knows Best”. We are mostly all mothers and we are trying to tell you that we do know what is best for us and the West Side is where most of us do want the center. Thank you.

Suzanne Desilets, 22 Wilmot Street, Manchester stated:

For the last three years the senior center has been postponed. I think that we have been waiting long enough. It is time for a decision. I wish for the center to stay where it is now but we need more space for parking for the center and the library. If you decide on another site, a lot of seniors don’t have transportation. Also I don’t think that consolidation with the Health Department would work. We go to the center to enjoy friends and make new friends. Thank you for taking the time to listen to me.

Carol Williams, Manchester stated:

My comments tonight are related to the recently deleted ADA Training Coordinator position. The ADA Coordinator, that is the Americans With Disabilities Act, must be someone who is proficient in all areas of the Americans With Disabilities Act and has detailed knowledge of requirements for access to all City programs, services and activities. They must have a complete understanding of all aspects of structural accessibility requirements for all City owned facilities and properties. The ADA Coordinator must be able to build relationships with those of us in the disability community here in this City in order to understand and have the knowledge of the City’s disability community and the issues we face on a day-to-day basis. The previous coordinator and I worked to make ACCESS Manchester. That is the advisory committee, a viable force in this City for access to facilities and programs. Our successes were many but by no means close to completion. I met with Ms. Lamberton, the new ADA Coordinator, the HR Director and she chaired the recent meeting of ACCESS Manchester and Alderman Lopez also attended. Ms. Lamberton announced that the Committee need no longer meet on a monthly basis as “she didn’t have time.” Neither do we. We have been waiting 10 years for the City to comply. Alderman Lopez discussed at one length the specifics of a curb cut and whether it was valid or not. One should not argue about a law when they are not familiar with its legitimacy. More importantly, I am concerned that the coordinator may not have the tremendous knowledge she needs. I have

worked with City departments and personnel for the past eight years in good faith. Recent statements made by some on this Board were that you spent too much money. Well, this is indicative of how the City wants to serve the residents with disabilities. With that said, you have left us two options – grievance or lawsuit. What tax dollars will be saved then? I thank you for listening.

Walter Stiles, 226 Sagamore Street, Manchester stated:

I am one of the Elderly Services Commissioners. In fact there are five of us and I am elderly and so are the rest of them. I will be 80 in October. Anyway, you have all received the letter that we wrote to the Board of Aldermen and the Mayor also regarding the freestanding elderly center. I think that we spent enough time trying to make a decision on where to build this center. The letter is self-explanatory and I am sure that you will be reading it if you haven't already. We would like to have you read it. I am not going to read it. I think it is time to act and I think it would save money in the long run that a lot of people in this City and cities all over the United States that live and look at four walls all day long and it isn't good for their health and really the City would save money in the long run if we had a place where more elderly people could attend. Now my wife and I don't need an elderly center but a lot of people do so I suggest that we finally get going on this elderly center and get the thing built. Thank you.

Robert Cote, 108 Glenwood Avenue, Manchester stated:

We have been debating on a senior center here for a couple of years. Some of the seniors that could have used a new center have probably already passed away while we talk about it. The time to act I believe is now because by the year 2010 the Baby Boomers are going to be seniors and it is going to be the fastest rising segment of the population. We need a center on a bus line with ample parking and room for expansion. If it be the West Side that proves the best location and the best financial and accessible center, fine but we should take care of our seniors. They are the only group that can say seen that, done that and have gone through it. The older seniors served in World War II and the younger seniors such as myself in the Korean Conflict and the new seniors will be coming out of the Viet Nam deal. It is growing at a rapid rate. The cost of a center is small in comparison to the rewards to the City. If you can keep the elderly who are suffering from the onset of dementia, Alzheimer's and sadness due to loss of a loved one out of a nursing home or out of an assistive center where there is a tremendous cost where very few can pay for any length of time, you are saving the State, Federal and local government a lot of money. Furthermore, as you know our hospitals wouldn't be operating the way they do today without the volunteering of our seniors. Our Salvation Army manning the kettles in the winter time for their drives, the blood drives, the food drives...the seniors participate in these with a great deal of zeal. I think they deserve the same amount of attention that we give, rightfully so, to our younger citizens who have not yet contributed. Some of these seniors have been paying taxes in Manchester for 50 years. Myself, I just turned 62 so I am hitting my 40th year. To keep these seniors vibrant, out of nursing homes and early depression is worth every dime you will spend on a center. If

we get together and spend the money and we say build it and they will come, I am sure they will and we can offer far more than what we are offering them today.

Rita Powers, 477 Laurel Street, Manchester stated:

I want to know what an old biddy like me is doing talking to you people. I think we come here often enough to do something about it. It is not that we can't stand you all. You are all nice people but we are old, we are senior citizens and I don't want to get older unless I can find a place to go. So I think you should all get off your little tushies and get going.

Fred O'Connor, 23 Country Club Drive, Manchester stated:

I have been involved with the senior center now for about 10 years. In the last three years I have been very much involved in the senior center relocation. If the Board of Aldermen realized how much these seniors depend on one location in the area where they are living near the high rises so they can walk back and forth to the centers and go have their meals at the centers and things of that kind because a lot of them aren't able to drive anymore and they don't have the money to have cars either and their spouses have died so they are all alone and they need this place somewhere in a location that they can get to without transferring on buses two or three times. All they need is to be able to get together, have a little social life, get a little exercise if they have that in the center and things of that type. It is going to mean a lot to their good health for the rest of their life. Thank you very much.

Irene Robie, 1046 Hayward Street, Manchester stated:

I have a message from all of the seniors tonight. On the subject of going into the Rines Building and becoming consolidated, the answer is a definite no. We hope that this does not come up again. On another note, I want to talk about a severe waste of money. In the year 2000 we paid a surveyor \$35,000 to go around the City and see if they could find eligible land that was owned by the City or could be bought by the City so that we could build a senior center. He came back and said there were 34 sites but they were all too small and were not adequate to build a decent center on but we could always go into the Sears building. At that time the choice spot was the Sears building and the seniors said no. Then he said there is only Singer Park and of course Singer Park is contaminated and only good for hotels. I think, gentlemen, that you should get your money back. That \$35,000 could pay for a very hard working person for a solid year. Thank you very much.

Rita O'Connor, Manchester stated:

The West Side Center is where we would like to stay. Tonight I am speaking for the West Side Center seniors. First off we have bus service right outside of the door. Ask Lillian and ask Fred, they take the bus there as many times as I know at least twice a week. Also you do not realize that we have Meals on Wheels where for \$2 we can get a complete meal. We have flowers, tablecloths and we have dessert and all you want coffee and tea. Ask John and ask Jeannine. These are the ladies and gentlemen that walk every single day down to the senior center on the West Side. We also have a library downstairs where we take out books

and videos and we are all under one building. Company meet there everyday. They have coffee and dessert or just chat. This is what we want and this is what we like. Besides there are three high rises that are within walking distance of the center. Please don't send us to the Rines Center. Wellington Circle or Wellington Road is fine but it is too far away from everything that they want so hear us. It is time that the seniors stay where we want to stay. Thank you very much for listening.

Louise Provencher, 84 Varney Street, Manchester stated:

I live within walking distance of the West Side Center and I live alone and it is very lonely. It is wonderful to have a senior center close by that I can walk to because I haven't got a car either. I am speaking for everyone else who is in the same position as I am that we congregate there and play games and some people eat there and we fill the void that we have from living alone in our apartments by coming together and having a great time and supporting ourselves. I can speak for everyone when I say that when you live alone you get lonely so we get together there and we really enjoy ourselves. Thank you.

Steve Vaillancourt, 161 Faith Lane, Manchester stated:

In the immortal words of Yogi Berra, it is like déjà vu all over again with the senior center but I am not here to talk about the senior center although I do have an outstanding promise that once the new senior center is built I will go and deal blackjack once a week. I am sure, your Honor, it was an oversight or perhaps you intended it later but we did witness yesterday the passing of a very wonderful woman in the City of Manchester, my former colleague as a State Representative and head of Legislators for Limited Spending, Frances Riley so I just wanted to mention that we all miss Fran a great deal already. As a representative of Ward 8 for the past six years, I have often been in touch with Bob Barry, the coordinator at the State level of the airport access road and following the public hearing you had a couple of weeks ago here and the words that were spoken I thought it was time to get in touch with Mr. Barry again and see if anything has changed. Well, I did get in touch with Bob Barry yesterday and I have a letter documenting my conversation with him and also with Commissioner Carol Murray. Now at the meeting at 6:15 PM tonight Alderman Wihby said that Carol wasn't returning his phone calls and believe me she returned my call and if she would return a lowly State Representatives call I can't imagine why she wouldn't yours but this is in regard to the rezoning of the King family land in the Hazelton Court/Brown Avenue area. Last year when this came up I had conversation after conversation with a member of the King Family who kept assuring me that they were going to be able to keep a portion of this land to build upon. Every time I spoke with him I would call Bob Barry who kept assuring me that there was no chance of that and that the State would need to take all of that land for the airport access road. So, the issue was over and done with but lo and behold it has come up again so I wondered well what has changed in the last year that now maybe some of this land might be available to build upon? Well after talking to Bob Barry and Carol Murray, the simple answer is this one. In the words of Senator Lou D'Allesandro, "nada, zilch, nothing has changed". The State still intends to take that entire parcel of land where the

King family purports to want to build a hotel. It seems clear to me that somebody is and I don't want to use the "L" word but somebody is misrepresenting to you the citizens of Manchester for the simple purpose of driving the price of this land up when the State comes to take it one and a half to two years from now for the airport access road. During the hearing tonight it was mentioned that this doesn't really matter all that much if the King family gets a couple of hundred million...I am sorry a couple of million more because it is only Federal money and not State or City money. I say that is bologna. This will never be built, this hotel, and the threat of building low income housing there is nothing more than a threat like a knife to the throat of my constituents in Ward 8. They are being used as pawns in this game to drive the price of this land up. This will never be built. Everybody knows it will never be built. It is all a scheme to drive the price of this land up but don't take my word for it. Take the word of your own Planning Director, Bob MacKenzie, who also spoke with Bob MacKenzie or better yet, you question Bob Barry. You listened to the developer putting words in his mouth tonight. Have Bob Barry or Carol Murray here for them to tell you exactly what they told me and Bob MacKenzie before you go forward with this insane idea. Thank you very much.

Robin Comstock, 889 Elm Street, Manchester stated:

I am here tonight to request that you reinstate the cleaning service that you had pledged to provide the Manchester Welcome Center. I should mention to you for the record that I am the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce. We at the Chamber are extremely sensitive and empathetic to the budget issues you face as Aldermen, however, we can't have a visitor center open to the public for eight to ten hours per day, six to seven days a week without an exceptional daily cleaning service. If our Welcome Center is anything less than impeccable, we are doing a gross disservice to our community and to the contributors that made this facility possible. Excluding the \$15,000 that the Chamber will put into this facility every single year that we run it for membership dues to the Granite State Ambassadors and for staff to manage the facility, our members have put in thousands and thousands of dollars and given hundreds and hundreds of hours at no charge or at charitable rates so that this community can have an extraordinary facility that they can be proud of. In hard cash, excluding charitable contributions, this is a \$51,000 project to date. The City is already getting a significant return on its \$35,000 investment and the Center deserves the very basic service of daily professional cleaning. It is my understanding that the City already contracts with ServiceMaster for many of its public buildings. It was agreed that the Welcome Center would simply be added to their schedule. We vigorously ask you to please, please reinstate the plan to have ServiceMaster clean the Welcome Center. Our grand opening celebration is scheduled for 4 PM on Thursday, July 25th. You are each invited. You will soon receive an invitation and I hope very much that each of you can attend. I also hope very much that the Welcome Center is clean. Thank you.

Karl Sartori, 205 Village Circle Way, Manchester stated:

I am a member of the disabled community here in Manchester and I would like to echo the words of Carol Williams, Representative Williams. The ADA law passed 10 years ago and it was no secret. Everyone knew it was coming and yet it has been 10 years and we are still fighting for simple things like curb cuts. These are things that need to change. It is not acceptable. In the not too distant future, each of you, if you haven't already, will be exposed to disabilities, either through birth defect, accidents or simple advanced age. I find the older I get, my disabilities are compounded by the things that everybody else faces. I would like to challenge you all to look at the community when you go out shopping or out with your family to dinner. Notice things like whether or not there are enough parking spaces. There are a lot of parking areas, for example in Manchester, that don't have a van accessible space and simple things like an 8' access aisle next to a van accessible space makes all the difference when you are in a van with a lift. There is nothing like going out and doing your grocery shopping and have somebody park next to you and you can't get back into your van. That is why we need an ADA Coordinator in the City of Manchester. The lady who served the town well and this is the largest City in New Hampshire, I believe, has a great deal of knowledge. She doesn't necessarily know everything there is about the ADA but we don't have to and she doesn't have to. All she has to know is where to find the information that she needs and that is a lady who knows where to find that information. To lose her would be a devastating loss to the disabled community of Manchester. It will also be a devastating loss to everyone in Manchester because sooner or later you are all going to be where we sit. Thank you.

Lloyd Basinow, 503 Amherst Street, Manchester stated:

I hadn't intended to speak tonight and I am going to make this brief. I have been witnessing here tonight something that I dreaded and that was the West Side being pitted against the East Side versus the North End of Manchester relative to a senior center. If we allow this type of wrangling back and forth, it will be another 10 years before we see a senior center. I think that it is time, regardless of what people may personally want...we are never going to be able to satisfy everybody in the City. Transportation will be available no matter where we put the senior center. Let's get together and get it built.

Robert Davis, 440 Granite Street, Manchester stated:

I have a concern about two sidewalks on Granite Street. They were torn apart by the snowplows in the winter. When they plow they tear them all apart. A few nights ago one of my neighbors on the West Side on Granite Street a couple of houses down from me sprained their ankle really bad. She fell off the sidewalk because it was so torn up. I was concerned about this and wanted to know if they could be fixed. I am also concerned about the disabled using this sidewalk.

Mayor Baines replied please talk to Mr. Thomas who is in the back and give him the location of the sidewalk.

There being no one else present wishing to speak, on motion of Alderman Wihby, duly seconded by Alderman Lopez, it was voted to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented.

This being a special meeting of the Board, no further business can be presented and on motion of Alderman Wihby, duly seconded by Alderman Pinard, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk